JFK Items Taken Off the Block

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A total of seven lots containing 21 items, most of them documents, have been withdrawn from the two-day auction of John F. Kennedy memorabilia set to begin this afternoon in Manhattan.

"Six lots contain 20 documents, and the seventh is the desk," said Janene Ferrara, a spokeswoman at the National Archives and Records Administration. She was referring to an antique drop-leaf signing table used by the late president. (Kennedy's physician thought using the table, six inches lower than the president's desk, would relieve his back pain.) It and three of Kennedy's papers were withdrawn yesterday.

Federal archivists were to take possession of the items yesterday. Because of national security concerns, several documents already were in their custody for review.

Talks were continuing late yesterday between lawyers for Kennedy's children and Robert White, a Maryland collector who provided the bulk of the items for the heavily publicized auction. White inherited much of the material from Evelyn Lincoln, the late president's personal secretary, with whom he had struck up an acquaintance.

Kennedy's children, Caroline and John Jr., had issued a statement Monday charging that Lincoln had "breached both the public trust and that of our family" by converting an "overwhelming" number of historic papers and personal items to her own use. One was a money clip attached to a St. Christopher's medal that their mother gave their father and that was thought to have been lost.

In a statement yesterday, Arlan Ettinger, president of Guernsey's auction house, said, "It is disappointing that the Kennedy children have chosen unnecessarily to sully the name and image of a woman like Evelyn Lincoln."

NEWSDAY, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 1998

Newsday 3/18/98